

## **Probate Court Judge**

**with Honorable Gregory C. Pittman, Muskegon County Probate Court**

### **Keywords**

**Attorney** – A professional who has earned a law degree, passed the bar exam, and is licensed by the State Bar of Michigan to practice law in the state. Also known as a lawyer.

**Divorce** – The ending of the legal relationship between spouses.

**Criminal Matters** – Legal issues related to violations of criminal law.

**Guardian** – A person with the legal duty and power to care for another individual who is under age 18, a legally incapacitated person, or a developmentally disabled person or the estate of the developmentally disabled person.

**Inherit** – To receive property from someone who dies.

**Judge** – A judge is an elected official given authority to make decisions in civil and criminal proceedings in a court of justice. To serve in the state's judicial branch of government, a judge must be admitted to the practice of law for at least five years and be less than 70 years old at the time of election or appointment (to fill a vacancy). A justice is a judge of a supreme court.

**Law Firm** – A group of lawyers who are in business together.

**Mental Health Treatment** – Care for a person with a substantial disorder of thought or mood that significantly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to cope with the ordinary demands of life. Treatment is for his or her own welfare, or for the welfare of others or of the community and may include hospitalization.

**Probate Court** – The court in Michigan that handles the process by which a decedent's estate is transferred to its rightful owners. This court also handles matters relating to the commitment of mentally ill persons, guardianship matters, conservatorship matters, and trusts; however, if one of these matters arises from a child protective proceeding, a juvenile delinquency proceeding, or a domestic relations custody case, it is properly heard in the family division of the circuit court.

**For more definitions, see the Michigan Judicial Institute's [Handbook of Legal Terms](#).**